COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2026, Legislative Day No. 9

Bill No. 56-26

Mr. Julian E. Jones, Jr., Councilman

By the County Council, April 20, 2026

A BILL
ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Zoning Regulations – Uses Permitted in the R.C.2 Zone – Natural Burial Grounds

FOR the purpose of permitting a natural burial ground (pet and owner of pet) by-right in the Resource Conservation (R.C.2) Zone (Agricultural) under certain circumstances; establishing certain definitions; permitting the owner of a pet to authorize the burial of their pet on a natural burial ground (pet and owner of pet) under certain circumstances; establishing that a natural burial ground (pet and owner of pet) is not a pet cemetery; requiring the review of certain submittals by the Director of the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability; and generally relating to uses permitted in the R.C. 2 Zone and natural burial grounds.

BY repealing and re-enacting, without amendments

Sections 101.1, the definition of "Natural Burial Ground" listed alphabetically, and 401.2.G
Baltimore County Zoning Regulations, as amended

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.
[Brackets] indicate matter stricken from existing law.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from bill.
Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

BY adding

Sections 101.1, the definition of "Natural Burial Ground (Pet and Owner of Pet)" listed alphabetically, 1A01.2.B.16 and 401.2.I
Baltimore County Zoning Regulations, as amended

WHEREAS, pet cemeteries are defined by the Baltimore County Code and permitted by the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations, subject to certain conditions; and

WHEREAS, natural burial grounds are defined and permitted by the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations, subject to certain conditions; and

WHEREAS, there exists an increasing desire on the part of pet owners to be buried adjacent to their pets in natural burial grounds; and

WHEREAS, the County Council finds it appropriate at this time to permit such adjacent burials in natural burial grounds in the R.C. 2 Zone, subject to certain restrictions; now, therefore

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations read as follows:

ARTICLE 1 – GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 101 – Definitions

§ 101.1. Word usage; definitions.

Words used in the present tense include the future; words in the singular number include the plural number; the word "shall" is mandatory. For the purposes of these regulations, certain terms and words are defined below.

Any word or term not defined in this section shall have the ordinarily accepted definition as set forth in the most recent edition of Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged.

NATURAL BURIAL GROUND – A property intended for use for the burial or permanent disposition of the remains of the dead, utilizing natural burial methods and biodegradable materials that permit the body to return naturally to the earth.

NATURAL BURIAL GROUND (PET AND OWNER OF PET) – A NATURAL BURIAL GROUND THAT OPERATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 401.2 AND 401.2.1 OF THESE REGULATIONS, AS APPLICABLE, AND WHICH ALSO ALLOWS THE BURIAL OF A PET AS THAT TERM IS DEFINED IN § 21-20-101 OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY CODE AND THE OWNER AS THAT TERM IS DEFINED IN §12-1-101 OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY CODE OF A PET OR PETS IN ADJACENT BURIAL PLOTS.

ARTICLE 1A – RESOURCE CONSERVATION ZONES

Section 1A01 – R.C.2 (Agricultural) Zone

§ 1A01.2. Use regulations.

B. Uses permitted as of right. The following uses only are permitted as of right in all R.C.2 Zones:

16. NATURAL BURIAL GROUND (PET AND OWNER OF PET) IN COMBINATION WITH A PET CEMETERY ON A SINGLE LOT OR CONTIGUOUS LOTS UNDER COMMON OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL OF AT LEAST 150 ACRES ON WHICH

IS ALSO LOCATED AN EXISTING STATE LICENSED ANIMAL SHELTER, SUBJECT TO SECTIONS 401.2 AND 401.2.1 AS APPLICABLE.

ARTICLE 4 – SPECIAL REGULATIONS

Section 401 – Cemeteries and Alternative Burial Grounds

§ 401.2. Natural burial ground.

A natural burial ground is permitted subject to the following conditions:

G. The owner of land on which a natural burial ground is to be located shall, at the time of application for the special exception, submit to the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability a hydrogeologic study completed by a professional hydrogeologist, or similarly qualified consultant, that includes the following:

1. A scaled site plan showing the proposed location of the areas to be used for burial, property boundaries, topography, water bodies, USDA soil type, existing and proposed wells and septic systems on and within 200 feet of the property line, and existing and proposed structures on and within 200 feet of the property line;

2. A determination of the depth to bedrock and depth and flow direction of groundwater beneath the area proposed as burial ground;

3. An assessment of proposed burial practices regarding the potential impacts of buried remains on groundwater quality, surface water quality, and domestic water supplies in relation to human health and the environment; and

4. Recommendations as to the appropriate number, and the location and placement, of burial sites on the land based on the findings in Paragraphs G.1, 2, and 3.

I. 1. THIS PARAGRAPH ONLY APPLIES TO A NATURAL BURIAL GROUND (PET AND OWNER OF PET).

2. THE OWNER OF A PET MAY AUTHORIZE THE BURIAL OF THEIR PET OR PETS ON A NATURAL BURIAL GROUND (PET AND OWNER OF PET), PROVIDED THE PET OR PETS ARE BURIED IN A PLOT THAT IS ADJACENT TO THE OWNER'S BURIAL PLOT.

3. A NATURAL BURIAL GROUND (PET AND OWNER OF PET) IN WHICH A PET IS BURIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION IS NOT A PET CEMETERY AS THAT TERM IS DEFINED IN § 21-20-101 OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY CODE.

4. A NATURAL BURIAL GROUND THAT IS PERMITTED BY-RIGHT UNDER THESE REGULATIONS IS SUBJECT TO THE REVIEW OF ANY SUBMITTALS REQUIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH G OF THIS SECTION AND APPLICABLE REGULATIONS BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that this Act, having been passed by the affirmative vote of five members of the County Council, shall take effect 14 days after its enactment.

LEGISLATION DETAIL

LEGISLATION	BILL 56-26
DISPOSITION	PASSED
ENACTED	05/31/26
EFFECTIVE	06/14/26
AMENDMENTS	NO

ROLL CALL - BILL

MOTION JONES SECOND MARKS

AYE	NAY	
☑	☐	Councilman Young
☑	☐	Councilman Patoka
☐	☐	
☑	☐	Councilman Jones
☑	☐	Councilman Marks
☑	☐	Councilman Ertel
☑	☐	Councilman Crandell

ROLL CALL - AMENDMENTS

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